

Cervical Spinal Fusion Surgery

General Information

Cervical spinal fusion is a surgery that may help when your neck pain has not improved after having other treatments.

Surgery may help relieve pain from:

- arthritis
- disc problems
- slippage of a spinal bone (vertebrae) on another.

About Surgery

- Your surgeon will fuse or “weld” the vertebral bones together to eliminate movement at the painful or affected levels in your spine.
- Your surgeon will place pieces of bone, bone graft materials or both, along the sides or between the vertebrae. The bone cells grow and mature. Movement at this part of your spine will stop when the bone becomes solid and the vertebrae are fused together.
- Over time, the fused vertebrae could cause added pressure on other spinal levels. This means you may need more treatments or surgery.

Bone used during surgery can be your own bone, from a donor or both.

- Your bone would likely be taken from your pelvis. This would be from a separate incision (cut).
- Donor bone is from the American Red Cross or from another certified tissue bank. All bank bone is been carefully processed and sterilized.
- Your surgeon may need to access the front of your spine through an incision on the front or side of your neck. (This is known as an anterior approach.)
- Your surgeon may need to access the back part of your spine through an incision on the back of your neck. (This is known as a posterior approach.)
- You may need the surgical placement of plates, screws or wires. This helps keep the vertebrae being fused from moving. It will increase the chance of the bones fusing.
- There is a chance the hardware can become loose. If your hardware becomes loose or breaks, you may have neck pain or arm pain or both. You may need surgery to remove the hardware.

(over)

Bracing

You may be fitted with a brace. This will keep the site of the fusion from moving so it can heal.

Care After Surgery

- You can go home once discharge criteria have been met. See your spine education book for more details about discharge criteria.
- If you need more care than what you can provide at home, members of your health care team may arrange for extra help. These arrangements will be made before you leave the hospital.

Whom to Call With Questions

Talk with your health care team if you have any questions or concerns.